AmeriCorps Members: Bridging the Digital Divide

AmeriCorps members are helping to bridge the digital divide and ensure the promise of technology for more Americans. Working in schools, community centers, and YMCAs, AmeriCorps members are providing the hands-on instruction, expertise, and guidance needed to help children and adults succeed and thrive in the digital age.

With support from leading technology companies and nonprofits, hundreds of AmeriCorps members are working in technology initiatives this year. In communities across the country, AmeriCorps members are wiring schools to the Internet, training teachers on how to use technology in the classroom, and providing one-on-one instruction to children and adult learners.

A sample of national and local AmeriCorps initiatives:

PowerUP. Together with America's Promise, AOL, the YMCA, the Boys and Girls Clubs, and others, AmeriCorps*VISTA is assigning up to 400 members to work in schools and community technology centers across the country. AOL, Gateway, Sun Microsystems, and other corporate partners have pledged more than $10 million in this effort.

Project FIRST. More than 40 AmeriCorps members are serving this year with Project FIRST—a partnership between IBM and the Public Education Network. AmeriCorps members refurbish and install computers and wire schools to the Internet, help train teachers to use technology in the classroom, and provide hands-on instruction to students. AmeriCorps members are now serving with Project FIRST in Atlanta, Ga.; New York City; Oakland, Calif.; and Washington, D.C.

Teaming for TECHnology. With support from IBM and the United Way of America, 65 AmeriCorps*VISTA members are helping nonprofits assess their technology needs—including hardware, software, and volunteer experts—to ensure quality service to disadvantaged communities and their residents. The AmeriCorps*VISTA members then assist IBM in the distribution of computers and software and generate additional resources.
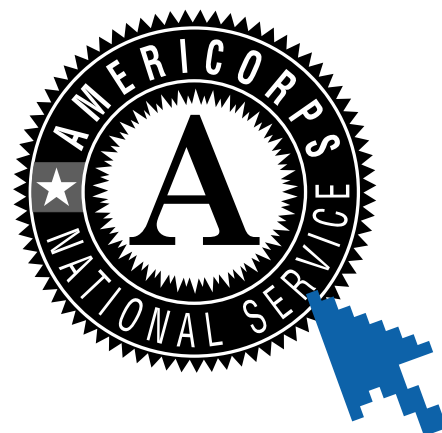
NextDay. AmeriCorps*VISTA members in sixteen Empowerment Zones are taking schools that have been wired to the next step of integrating technology into the standard curriculum. They are also working as part of a community team that includes school officials, public housing representatives, and local business people in an effort to increase and sustain community involvement with the schools.

AmeriCorps*National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC). Working in schools and Boys and Girls Clubs across the country, AmeriCorps*NCCC members are installing computer labs, teaching computer skills to students and adults, and running "power hours" in which students learn to do their homework on the computer. Recent AmeriCorps*NCCC project sites have included Aberdeen, Md.; Manchester, N.H.; Detroit, Mich.; Denver, Colo.; San Diego, Calif.; Albany, N.Y.; and Greenville, S.C.

> "AmeriCorps is putting the people power in place so that the digital divide can be closed, not just through technology, but through people."
>
> Steve Case, Chairman
> America On Line (AOL)
> November 8, 1999

Tech Corps. A national nonprofit organization of technology volunteers, Tech Corps helps to improve K-12 education by integrating technology into the learning environment. AmeriCorps*VISTA members will assess the technology needs of local schools, provide leadership in recruiting and training community volunteers, and develop the future capacity of the schools by fostering partnerships with businesses and universities.

Ohio Community Computing Center Networks. Across Ohio, AmeriCorps*VISTA members are turning storefronts, church basements, schools, and libraries in low-income neighborhoods into technology centers for local residents.

Lyndon State College, Vermont. AmeriCorps members provide computer and literacy training to youth and adults throughout the Northeast Kingdom.

Jobs for Maine's Graduates. AmeriCorps members are bringing together schools, adult education programs, and libraries to improve computer education programs for students and adults.

Lower Mississippi Delta Service Corps. AmeriCorps members serving throughout the Mississippi Delta, teach basic computer literacy skills to students and their parents in after-school programs.

City Year. AmeriCorps members serving with City Year in Seattle, Wash.; Cleveland, Ohio; and San Antonio, Texas, are also helping bridge the digital divide. Activities include operating an out-of-school computer curriculum for K-5 students and assisting teachers in using computer technology; offering Internet instruction for adults and children; and developing a technology curriculum for children.

Computers for Louisiana's Kids. The Lousiana Delta Service Corps, the Louisiana Corporate Recycling Council, and the governor's office are working to give the state's children the skills and equipment they need through the CLK program (Computers for Lousiana's Kids).

AmeriCorps members with the programs will teach students how to refurbish, test, and operate donated computers—giving the students valuable job skills and providing public schools with much-needed technology.

Butler County Board of Education. In Greenville, Ala., AmeriCorps members are teaching computer skills and providing after-school tutoring and mentoring to elementary students in three rural schools.

For more information on how AmeriCorps is helping bridge the digital divide, call Sandy Scott at (202) 606-5000, x255, or visit *www.americorps.org*.

For information about serving as an AmeriCorps member, visit *www.americorps.org* or call 1-800-942-2677.

Learn about how you can join AmeriCorps and help create digital opportunity for all.

www.americorps.org